



As Commissioner of Agriculture, it is my pleasure to proudly support the efforts of the Alabama Manufacturers and Producers Association, in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries and the Alabama Grocers Association, in their “Buy Alabama’s Best” 2008 kickoff. On a daily basis at the Department of Agriculture & Industries, we strive to inform all Alabamians of the quality foods which are made right here in our home state. The food that Alabama manufacturers provide to our consumers is some of the safest food in the world, along with the best tasting. The “Buy Alabama’s Best” campaign is successful, largely due to the fact that teamwork and the love of all that is Alabama is its main concern. It is a joy to work with the good people who are the owners and producers of food companies in our state, as well as those individuals who own and run the retail stores across Alabama who carry Alabama products.

I agree with the Alabama Manufacturers and Producers Association that it is important to buy foods produced locally, because Alabama food product sales have over a \$2 billion impact on our state’s economy. Also, Alabama Food Manufacturers, Grocers and Food Service entities, including restaurants, employ approximately 250,000 people. So as we buy from our local producers, we are fueling the profits right back into our state’s economy. Not only do Alabama food manufacturers sell products in Alabama and employ Alabamians, but they also purchase vast amounts of raw farm products to make their goods, paper and boxes to package their goods and large amounts of raw materials from other Alabama industries, all benefitting the Alabama farmer.

On top of supporting so many Alabama entities, the “Buy Alabama’s Best” campaign also benefits our state’s most precious commodity, our children. I am proud to be a part of the effort to raise money for the Janie Sims “Curing Childhood Cancer” Foundation.

So, again, as Commissioner of Agriculture, I want to thank all of those individuals who help make this a success including the manufacturers themselves, the grocers, and especially the Alabama consumer who makes an effort to buy their food from local manufacturers.

Thank you.

Ron Sparks
Commissioner